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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 DAKAR 000081

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TAGS: [OREP](#) [EAID](#) [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [KMCA](#) [KPKO](#) [SG](#)
SUBJECT: CODEL KOLBE'S MEETING WITH PRESIDENT WADE FOCUSES
ON MCA, HUMAN RIGHTS, PEACEKEEPING AND CASAMANCE PEACE
PROCESS

REF: A. DAKAR 0072 (NOTAL)
[1](#)B. DAKAR 0043 (NOTAL)
[1](#)C. 05 STATE 228797 (NOTAL)

DAKAR 00000081 001.2 OF 003

Classified By: CDA ROBERT P. JACKSON FOR REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: Codel Kolbe met with Senegalese President Abdoulaye Wade for over 75 minutes on January 4. They discussed Senegal's Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) proposal; peacekeeping; human rights, especially the charges against former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck; and the Casamance peace process. The Codel underscored U.S. friendship, and both sides emphasized shared values. For his part, Wade insisted that the Seck prosecution is about corruption rather than politics and hinted that security charges against Seck may soon be dropped. He declared that the Casamance peace process is irreversible. Senior officials have since told us that Wade was pleased with the visit. END SUMMARY.

[1](#)2. (U) PARTICIPANTS:

United States	Senegal
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Rep. Jim Kolbe	President Abdoulaye Wade
Rep. Dennis Rehberg	Prime Minister Macky Sall
Rep. Betty McCollum	Senior Minister for Foreign Affairs Cheikh Tidiane Gadio
Charge Robert P. Jackson	Senior Minister for Economy and Finance Abdoulaye Diop
USAID/Senegal Director Olivier Carduner	Minister of Urbanism Assane Diagne
MCC Senior Country Dir. for Francophone Africa Michael Grossman	Director of Cabinet Souleymane Ndene Ndiaye
HAC PSM Robert Blair	Minister-delegate for the Budget Cheikh Hadjibou Soumare
USAID Congressional Liaison Officer Susan Williams	Ambassador to the U.S. Lamine Ba
Military Escort Cmdr. Ben Pearson	Counselor to the President Pierre Goudiaby Atepa
Vice Consul Thomas Chojnacki (notetaker)	AMPMD Director General Habib MBaye
	APIX Director Aminata Niane
	Transportation Technical Advisor Abdou Aziz Gueye
	Counselor to the President Pape Camara (translator)

MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE ACCOUNT PROPOSAL

¶3. (U) President Wade, with Prime Minister Sall, Director of Cabinet Ndiaye, and AMPMD Director General Mbaye, began the 75-minute meeting by thanking Codel Kolbe for coming to Senegal. He also expressed his gratitude for the MCA initiative, noting that three years of eligibility has yet to translate into implementation. Wade said he understood the MCA precepts of growth and poverty reduction. Noting that Senegal's MCA proposal has evolved over time, he said the Diamniadio Platform has many advantages: its strategic location near a major crossroads, the planned new airport and new duty-free zone, as well as its proximity to the University of the Future. Wade insisted that the potential impact on GDP growth is clear, and the MCA project will fight poverty by creating jobs.

¶4. (U) Chairman Kolbe said MCA is forward looking. He praised Senegal's very ambitious and very visionary proposal. Kolbe assured Wade that the USG is committed to seeing the project through. He noted, however, that the complexity of Senegal's proposal requires feasibility studies to ensure that the MCA funds are well spent. Kolbe also acknowledged some impatience with the MCC's speed. Before moving from Wade's office to the larger conference room, Wade provided a tour of a number of models of existing and proposed building projects.

¶5. (SBU) Joined by other Senegalese Ministers and other officials, President Wade thanked President Bush and the USG for the best cooperation in Africa. Wade stressed our shared values. Chairman Kolbe extended President Bush's greetings. Kolbe again praised Senegal's very visionary MCA proposal. Expressing hope that we can move forward, Kolbe reiterated the need for studies and analysis. Kolbe noted that MCA eligibility is a reward for good governance rather than UN votes, and Senegal has met the first test. Rep. Rehberg noted that President Bush and the American

DAKAR 00000081 002.2 OF 003

people are Senegal's friends. Given his experience with development in Montana, particularly at reservations for Native Americans, Rehberg highlighted his understanding of rural development and praised Senegal's MCA concept. Mr. Grossman indicated that the MCA process was a partnership.

TERRORISM, PEACEKEEPING AND HUMAN RIGHTS

¶6. (U) Acknowledging Senegal's constitutional government, Rep. Kolbe praised Senegal's commitment to democracy and the rule of law. Rep. McCollum noted that Senegal's MCA proposal is very ambitious. She praised Ambassador Ba's activism. She stressed that having been selected for the MCA, Senegal should stand for democracy and human rights.

¶7. (U) Kolbe and Rehberg then thanked President Wade for Senegal's support in the Global War on Terrorism and for its commitment to peacekeeping. Kolbe noted that, as a percentage of its armed forces, Senegal has more peacekeepers than any other military. Kolbe and McCollum extended special thanks for Senegal's peacekeeping in Darfur.

THE SECK/THIES PUBLIC WORKS CASE

¶8. (C) Chairman Kolbe noted that President Wade has been a strong supporter of human rights. Kolbe said he was concerned by interference with the opposition and the arrest of former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck. He urged the GOS to resolve the case quickly, bringing it to trial if appropriate.

¶9. (C) President Wade responded at length, changing from English to French with translation to make certain that there was no misunderstanding. Wade said he considered Seck a son and had paid for his education. Wade said he had a heavy heart when the police arrested Seck. Significantly, Wade said that he was not convinced that there was evidence that Seck had in fact attempted to destabilize the Government

through non-democratic means; therefore, those charges should be dropped. However, the corruption and embezzlement charges were serious. Wade said that he had authorized up to 20-25 billion CFA francs (CFAF) (USD 40-50 million) to be spent on public works projects in Thies in 2004, with no loans. Seck, however, allegedly spent 46 billion CFAF (USD 92 million). Moreover, many of the projects were allegedly not put out for tender, which Wade declared is contrary to Senegalese law. In addition, there is evidence of overbilling and embezzlement. Wade asserted that 16 billion or more CFAF (USD 32 million or more) could not have been spent without Seck's involvement, and he apparently pressured the Public Markets Board to approve expenditures. Wade stated, "That is corruption; I stand for good governance."⁸ The legal system found grounds to detain Seck, including significant unexplained wealth of unknown origins. Wade insisted Seck "was not arrested for political reasons."⁸ Wade ended by noting that Seck has friends in the United States, including his American attorney.

¶10. (C) Rep. Kolbe responded that he appreciated the explanation and raised the case as a friend of Senegal. He pointed out that some believe the case against Seck is politically motivated, and that perception can best be addressed by bringing the case to trial. Wade concluded that part of the discussion by expressing his confidence in the judiciary, noting that he had been arrested and acquitted five times himself.

¶11. (C) NOTE: On January 10, International Committee of the Red Cross Delegate Henry Fournier told Charge that although he has received some requests to visit former Prime Minister Idrissa Seck in prison, he decided not to do so for the time being because he fears that such a visit could disrupt ongoing negotiations between Seck and Wade. END NOTE.

CASAMANCE PEACE PROCESS

¶12. (C) Wade did not want the Codel to depart before he described the state of the Casamance peace process. He said the GOS has succeeded in establishing peace with some of the Movement of Democratic Forces of the Casamance (MFDC) rebels)- all but one gang. He said the Government had analyzed the January 2 death of the deputy Prefect and had concluded that the death was essentially an accident (Ref B). Wade said the Government has decided not to react but has asked the MFDC to hand over the assassins for trial. Wade

DAKAR 00000081 003.2 OF 003

concluded that the peace process is irreversible.

COMMENT

¶13. (C) Senior government officials have told us that President Wade was very pleased with Codel Kolbe's visit, the first by a Codel to Senegal since 2004. While Wade indicated some impatience with the development of the MCA Compact, he seemed reassured by Codel Kolbe's overall comments about Senegal's MCA proposal. Wade was anxious to dispel the idea that the Seck case is politically motivated, and his comment about the likelihood of the security charges being dropped was encouraging, as are negotiations between Seck and Wade. Finally, Wade took pride in highlighting progress in the Casamance peace process.

¶14. (U) Codel Kolbe did not have an opportunity to clear this cable before departing Senegal. END COMMENT.
JACKSON